



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

Steven L. Beshear, Governor

Leonard K. Peters, Secretary

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CONTACT: Allison Fleck
502-564-3410

Kentucky Wild Rivers Program Adds 300 Acres to Inventory of Protected Lands *Purchases will help preserve Green River*

Frankfort, Ky. (Nov. 19, 2012) – Energy and Environment Secretary Len Peters today announced the purchase of 300 acres on two tracts of land in Hart County to help protect the exceptional quality and aesthetic character of the Green River, a portion of which is designated a Kentucky Wild River.

“The acquisition of these lands will help protect the exquisite natural environment of the Green River, which is the most biologically diverse branch of the Ohio River system,” said Sec. Peters.

The 135-acre Rush Island tract includes one mile of frontage on the Green River and adjoins property owned and preserved by the Hart County Historical Society. The bottomlands of the property have been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program to restore its natural habitats of native warm-season grasses.

The 165-acre Davis Bend tract, which includes 2.5 miles of frontage on the river, contains a mix of moist bottomlands, forested bluffs and springs that are important to the water quality of the Green River. The Kentucky Division of Water’s Wild Rivers Program will co-manage the property with the Kentucky chapter of The Nature Conservancy, from whom the land was purchased.

Both properties will remain closed to the public pending installation of parking areas and completion of biological and archaeological surveys.

The Green River harbors one of the most diverse assemblages of fish and freshwater mussels in the United States. More than 150 fish species and 70 mussel species have been found in the river.

The purchases were made possible through an award from the Heritage Land Conservation Fund, which is funded from the sale of nature license plates and the collection of unmined mineral taxes and environmental fines.

These funds may be used to purchase natural areas with rare habitats and endangered species; areas important to migratory birds; areas that perform important natural functions that are subject to alteration or loss; and areas to be preserved in their natural state for public use, outdoor recreation and education.

The Kentucky Wild Rivers Act of 1972 designated segments of nine rivers as Wild Rivers. This designation allows the segments to retain many of their natural attributes and it protects them from unwise use and development. Each Wild River is actually a linear corridor encompassing up to 2,000 feet of all land on either side of the river.

Some activities within these corridors are strictly prohibited, such as surface mining, clear-cutting of timber and construction of dams or other in-stream disturbances. While existing residential and agricultural use may continue, developments or activities that might impair the river's water quality or natural condition are regulated through a permit system.

When property owners are willing, the state may purchase lands within the corridor or within the watershed of the Wild River to further protect the waterway. These lands are then subject to the restrictions imposed on the Wild Rivers corridor.

For more information about the Kentucky Wild Rivers program, call Allison Fleck at 502-564-3410. For information about the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, call Zeb Weese at 502-573-3080.

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